

Suggested Talking Points
Mission Director Jon Lindborg
For Education and Livelihood Skills Alliance (ELSA)
Closing Out Event
6:00-8:00 PM, 24 September 2007
Petron Cultural Hall, Petron Megaplaza
Makati City

Greetings

Secretary Jesli Lapus, Department of Education (DepED)
Director General Augusto Syjuco, Technical Education Skills and
Development Authority (TESDA)
Secretary Ugtog Kawit, ARMM Department of Education
Mr. Bill Reese, International Youth Foundation (IYF)
CEO Nicasio Alcantara, Petron
Mr. Paul Dominguez (or possibly Ambassador Benny Tan),
Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP)
Vice-Chair
DepED Regional and Field Officers
Friends from Donor Community,
EQuALLS Alliance and partners
Ladies and Gentlemen

- I thank the Education and Livelihood Skills Alliance (ELSA), the Department of Education, EQuALLS Alliance partners, government and national government representatives for the warm welcome. Thank you also for the plaque of appreciation for USAID. It is always a pleasure to be with distinguished colleagues from the education sector.
- As you may be aware, United States assistance to education in the Philippines started more than a century ago with the coming to the Philippines of American volunteer teachers known as ‘Thomasites’. The Thomasites helped establish the public school system and foster unity and literacy by establishing

English as a medium of instruction, and by teaching the values of democracy and good citizenship. The current education project of the USG --EQuALLS --is a continuation of that long, cherished tradition. EQuALLS Alliance partners are the present day Thomasites.

- The current USAID's contribution to the basic education sector began three years ago with the implementation of EQuALLS Project. The project will run through 2011 with a planned budget of about 10 Million dollars every year. This investment form part of the overall USG portfolio to help alleviate poverty by investing more resources that will enable the people to participate productively in the local economy.
- I congratulate ELSA for being part of the USG's strategy of investing in people, specifically in;
 - Helping USAID achieve its objectives in education of providing school children in Mindanao a better education opportunity, and the out-of-school-youth the technical and vocational skills they need to productively participate in the local economy.
 - Demonstrating the effectiveness of global development alliance strategy; and
 - Strengthening USG partnership with Department of Education and the local government executives in responding to the needs of students, learners, and teachers.
- Today's closing of the first phase of the ELSA Alliance's work in Mindanao is an important event not only for the private and public partners of EQuALLS, but also for both the Philippine and American governments. For tonight, we celebrate the success and the lessons learned from the three-year partnership to improve access to quality education and provide livelihood and entrepreneurial skills training for out of school youth in Mindanao. ELSA --and its major alliance partners--has

provided an excellent example of the important role that the corporate world and civil society can play in working with government to bring peace and development to conflict-affected regions of the Philippines.

- Under EQuALLS Project, the US government is proud to have provided ELSA a total of \$4.20 million dollars funding support to: (1) provide community based learning opportunities in areas lacking schools and/or affected by conflict; (2) improve teaching capacity for math, science, and English (3) promote the reintegration of out-of-school youth into the peaceful, productive economy; and (4) strengthen local education governance to implement educational reforms.
- Aside from the number of teachers and students who benefited from the program, I acknowledge ELSA's equally important contribution of successfully implementing the US Government's Global Development Alliance strategy by bringing together the resources of private and public organizations to apply innovative solutions to address the education needs of children and youth in Mindanao. ELSA has demonstrated how the vast expertise and resources of multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral partnerships between local, national, and international organizations are translated into social capital to achieve the project objectives.
- ELSA achieved all of these by leveraging USG funding at the rate of 1:1.4 -- that is, ELSA provided 1.4 dollars for ever dollar they received from the USG.
- ELSA's partnership with DepED and TESDA and local universities and the Teacher Education Institution are also extremely important. We are now working effectively with the Department of Education to get more stakeholders, such as the

local government units, involved in addressing the educational needs of students, teachers, and the community.

- The EQuALLS Project will continue to employ the concept of ‘public/private alliances’ (PPAs) that will harness the resources and creative energies of local and international NGOs and corporations. We will continue to encourage organizations to bond together to have greater program impact under the EQuALLS project.
- USAID will continue to support the EQuALLS alliance partners to productively engage the Department of Education in sustaining what we started in Mindanao. In the next five years, the US Government will sustain its commitment to assist the Philippine Government in improving access to quality basic education in the region.
- I salute the alliance partner’s dedication in the critical area of education. I hope this event will affirm and strengthen our resolve to bring about positive change in the quality of education in the ARMM and other conflict affected areas of Mindanao.
- Mabuhay
- Maraming Salamat.